

he hates me
and I escape past loaves of bread and green
onions
to the signal on the corner
which reads
red.

my landlady

my landlady comes down
usually after one a.m.
after her husband crawls to bed
drunk and I am also about
finished --
pssst! she goes, pssst! it's me!
I peek out the
door.
look, Mrs. Hansen, I've had enough,
I'm finished.
o, you damn fool! open the door!
I
open the door.
here! take these!
she has 3 quarts of beer.
I laugh.
I'll be back!
I open a quart and sit in a
chair.
psst! pssst!
now she's at the back
door.
3 more quarts.
take these!
I put them in the
refrigerator.
I take a quart to her.
she's sitting in my favorite
chair.
you damn fool, what you been
doing?
nothing. kind of going
crazy.
you damn fool, I told you not to
quit that post office
job! but you wouldn't listen to an old woman,
would you?
well, it's not that
bad.
but you had security! you had
SECURITY!
you can get security in a jail,
Mrs. Hansen.

you damn fool, you know what I
mean!
we drink a while,
silently.
then she grins and looks at me:
Mr. Dubuckski
Bukowski.
Mr. Burdowsky, you know the niciest thing I like about us?
uh uh.
well, Mr. Burchooski, all the times I been down here,
we never done nothin',
have we?
not yet.
an' we're not going to do anything, are we, Mr. Bur....
Bukowski.
I mean, thas' what I like, I mean, I can come down here
and nothin's gonna happen, is
it?
I hope not, Mrs. Hansen.

she lifts her quart, and the night,
pardon me,
the morning has
begun. but for all my landladies, Mrs. Hansen
is the best I've had. we've got something in
common, although what it is
I haven't exactly
arrived at
yet.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, CA

A Very Long (but true) Story

I went out with this Hungarian once
and he really didn't believe
I was divorced or had two kids
or lived where I told him I lived.
So he came by one evening
and I answered the door with a towel
wrapped around my wet hair. I asked
him in. It seems after that
all he wanted to do was argue
about the insipidness of women
and America's need for a nice-nice image.
One evening he came over and nailed up
a large printed sign that said:

IT'S NICE TO BE NICE.

He said it would remind me how phoney